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FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

PROGRAM TOMORROW SHOW

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CITY CHICAGO

EXPERT ON THE CIA

TOM SNIDER: Our guests do not ride around in Mercedes 600's or Rolls Royces - - I hope our next guest will not dispute that - - his name is Andrew St. George and at the beginning of the program this morning I told you that he is a news reporter and what I consider to be a better sense of the word - - a man who gets out and looks at things that are happening and tries to deduce for himself - - and his readers, listeners, or viewers, why things are happening the way they are.

Mr. St. George is more than a bit of an expert on the CIA. He has covered their operations in this country and beyond the continental border for some years - - going back to the time of the activities in Cuba back in the early 60's - - and Mr. St. George it's a pleasure to have you with me on the program this morning - - I think.....

ANDREW ST. GEORGE: It's good to be here this morning.

SNIDER: What is this with the CIA - - Now we had this man, Salvador Allende, who lost power in Chile some months ago - - who was later killed - - what part did the CIA play in this - - considering the fact that over the past year there have been allegations about the CIA involvement and American expansionism going underway in that part of the world.

ST. GEORGE: Well there's no major event and certainly the change in Chile has been a major event without measurable CIA involvement.

SNIDER: Without the CIA?

ST. GEORGE: Without the CIA. The CIA is always involved - - it is today quite probably the principle instrument of American foreign policy - - so that we can reckon with CIA involvement of one kind or another - -

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SNIDER: What part did the CIA play in the military coup d'etat in Chile?

ST. GEORGE: Simply setting the policy - - and the policy began with a division of American aid - - traditionally American aide in Chile has been getting (unclear because of heavy accent) When President Allende came to power a great deal of the overall generally it was thought the aide to the military was continued because (unclear) so that an intimate relationship developed between the military and the CIA - -

SNIDER: The Chilean military.

ST. GEORGE: The Chilean military and the CIA.

SNIDER: Would it ever happen where people from the CIA - - operatives within Chile itself - - would meet with Chilean military officers - - or military officers of any other foreign government and say - - we're going to help you get rid of your president - - does that kind of thing go on? Do they have clandestine meetings and stuff like that?

ST. GEORGE: It does happen - - such meetings do occur - - they occur probably more frequently than most Americans think.

SNIDER: We don't know - - you see we aren't told about it.

ST. GEORGE: No the country really does not know - - and these meetings can be decisive - - they very often furnish the spark the catalyst, the trigger - - for the kind of changeover that happened in Chile - - They are far more important (unclear) than the American Ambassador - - on formal State meetings - - that what the CIA man says in confidence is often the decisive event.

SNIDER: How does this organization then of which so little is known to the American people become so enormously powerful in the implementation of American foreign policy? Because certainly the people have not given their consent or approval to this kind of operation we don't know about it. The Congress certainly hasn't said the CIA will be a strong arm agent of the American foreign policy - - from where does its power derive?

ST. GEORGE: It's hard to say. When you talk to people on Capitol Hill - - people in Congress - - they often seem startled by it all - - the rest of the people - - it's really amazing how little people know - - and how little people in Washington, who are supposed to know - - really account for and really do know. (unclear) This is a mysterious process - -

SNIDER: Does a president of the United States know the power he wields with an organization like the CIA?

ST. GEORGE: (unclear) and quite often the power flows not from the president to the CIA, but from the CIA to the president.

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SNIDER: But can a president say to the director of the CIA, I want something done about Allende - - I want something done about Trujillo - - I want something done about Castro - - does the president know he has that kind of power?

ST. GEORGE: Yes - - I suppose he does.

SNIDER: As for that tool - - does he know that he has a rather effective tool?

ST. GEORGE: I wonder - - if presidents have felt about the CIA in a variety of mixed ways - - as you know one of the last things President Johnson said was that it was (unclear) and that gives you the feeling that LBJ was worried about the CIA throughout his presidency - - and I think he was.

The relationship between the president and the CIA is a curious one and this is another odd thing about the organization. It really needs clarification.

SNIDER: It has been especially curious in the present administration, which is what I would like to get to after a commercial here - - and we will continue with Mr. St. George and discuss the CIA and its involvement with the current administration after this.

COMMERCIALS

SNIDER: We're speaking here this morning with Mr. Andrew St. George who we had identified as an investigative reporter and newsman - - and let me just define for you some of the things that he has covered on a free lance basis - - the Bay of Pigs invasion, the Algerian crisis of the 50's - - the trouble in the Congo - - military intervention by this country in Santo Domingo, the death of Che Guevarre(?) in Cuba - - the assassination of Trujillo in the Dominican Republic - - the list is long and involved. And he is currently working on a book, which will get at what Mr. St. George calls the root of the whole Watergate mess. And I suspect that several chapters in that forthcoming book will be devoted to CIA involvement in the Watergate - - the relationship between the present administration - - Mr. Nixon et al, and the CIA. I would like to discuss that please.

ST. GEORGE: Well we do feel it's at the root of Watergate, and we do feel that the way the whole intelligence establishment - - what we call the national security bureaucracy has grown - - proliferated - - taken over a great deal of Washington. Taken over an awful lot of functions that most Americans really don't know about. That this had a lot to do with Watergate - - That it was really at the bottom of it.

SNIDER: For example?

ST. GEORGE: Well for example it created the kind of an atmosphere in Miami from which these Cuban Americans sprang - - who carried out the actual burglary. It created people like E. Howard

Hunt - - shaped them - - and it shaped people like G. Gordon Liddy, who tried to imitate Hunt in many ways - - become the secret agent of fact and fiction.

The CIA not merely manages this country's affairs to an amazing extent - - it also sets a mood to an amazing extent. And we feel that this mood and this secrecy and this conspiracy - - led straight to Watergate.

SNIDER: How?

ST. GEORGE: Well it led to Watergate in a number of ways - - When we look back on it now, the idea to bug Larry O'Brien's home, especially if you consider that half the president's cabinet might go to jail for it - - seems like kind of a silly idea.

SNIDER: Dumb.

ST. GEORGE: Dumb is really the word for it - - but in the kind of a national mood - - especially the kind of Washington mood that the CIA has created - - it seemed like a natural thing to do. I bug you, you bug me - - we bug him - - everybody bugs everybody! Yes!

SNIDER: Yes - - and that's what's wrong with the country - - we're all bugging each other!

ST. GEORGE: That's precisely right - - in a literal sense.

SNIDER: From what you say the CIA has then created an atmosphere of paranoia?

ST. GEORGE: Well that is one of the things. What we have to fear is paranoia itself - - the only thing to be paranoid about is paranoia - - precisely right!

SNIDER: You mentioned these two guys - - E. Howard Hunt, and G. Gordon Liddy - - involved in the Watergate conspiracy and the break in and one of those gentlemen - - Mr. Hunt, I believe identified himself as the mastermind behind the break-in at the office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist here in southern California in 1971, where he had a red wig and and a mask on. What is an agency of the United States government doing passing out masks and wigs to people?

ST. GEORGE: All I can see is that this is all part of the mood - - part of the state of affairs that we have arrived at - - the growing domination and the growing influence of the secret machinery over national affairs.

SNIDER: But does the CIA have a stock of wigs - - and masks and paraphernalia like this? I mean it almost sounds like a comic opera house that they're running - - passing out the stuff to guys to go out and do burglaries!

ST. GEORGE: It does for the rest of us, but it's real to them.

That's their life.

SNIDER: How do you know these things?

ST. GEORGE: Well we investigate them - - we have some - -

SNIDER: Who is "we"?

ST. GEORGE: The media I guess - - and "we" is a good question, because it takes courageous editors as well as reporters - - but I think the editors don't get enough credit. At the Washington Post Dan Bradley hasn't got enough credit for the superb job the Post did - - and if I may say so - - at Harper's Bob Schnerr(?) Lou Lapham(?) and Larry Froinlish(?) - - especially courageous editors - - who have made it possible for us to investigate the CIA the way it should be - - in depth.

SNIDER: Yes, for example in the current issue of Harper's Magazine, I believe it is - - or one of the recent issues - - you have a rather extensive piece on CIA operations. And it does take some courage to print that kind of thing - -

ST. GEORGE: Especially on the editor's part - -

SNIDER: Is there any fear on your part that they will exert reprisal upon you or your editors for publishing this information? Saying these things on a program like this - - talking about it.

ST. GEORGE: They have been known to do that - - I have an editor shot out from under the other magazines for similar projects. There is a risk. They don't talk about it very much but it exists and we are all aware of it - -

SNIDER: Why then would the Congress - - elected representatives of the people - - tolerate this power in the hands of an organization like the CIA? Why would there not be more congressional investigations - - certainly they must read the papers back there and watch the television programs - - why would they not be more concerned in your estimation?

ST. GEORGE: I personally would say that the Congressional cover up for the CIA is a national shame. I have no other word for it. It really is a mystery - - a bafflement as we say - - and although we suspect that we know some of the reasons for it - - it's a disgrace. That's the only word for it.

SNIDER: All right. We will continue here with Mr. St. George after this announcement.

COMMERCIALS

SNIDER: Mr. St. George, you made a rather serious allegation here - - calling the cover up of the CIA in Congress a national disgrace. Can you be more specific than that?

ST. GEORGE: Well I can only be more specific by saying that what the press discovers Congress could also discover, more quickly, and more easily and more thoroughly - - but it never has. Very few of the meaningful discoveries about the CIA have come from Capitol Hill - - and that's the disgrace.

SNIDER: Is it possible there could be a feeling on the part of some lawmakers and on the part of administrators in the executive branch, that there is a need for an organization like the CIA, and that even though it does conduct itself with excess on occasions, that must be forgiven because of the need for the organization to begin with. I mean that we have to have an organization like that.

ST. GEORGE: I suspect there's a feeling on Capitol Hill that they better not fool with the CIA because it may kind of explode in their faces. There is a need for an organization like the CIA - - the way it was originally conceived in the National Security Act of 1947 - - which set it up. There is no need for an organization like the CIA is today.

SNIDER: What would it take to roll it back?

ST. GEORGE: A radical reorganization - - and that would have to come from Congress in fact.

SNIDER: Now there's a new director of the CIA, Mr. Colby I believe?

ST. GEORGE: (unclear) Colby - -

SNIDER: How do you see his role? Would there be any possibility that he may be aware of the need for some revision of the mission of the CIA?

ST. GEORGE: None of the changes that director Colby has made so far sound encouraging. They all sound ominous. He has cracked down on what is called the thinker in the agency - - the analyst - - the scholar - - the estimators - - Colby is known for his specification programs - - in Vietnam a similar program was carried out - - in Guatamala - -

SNIDER: Still for all the seriousness we attach to the CIA, they've blown some things. The E. Howard Hunt thing - - I don't want to keep going back to the fright wig and the mask, but I mean we laugh about this sort of things - - they do goofy things. I'm sure in your experience you've seen them commit mistakes that were hilarious!

ST. GEORGE: I would laugh at the CIA more easily if I didn't remember - - and I'm old enough to remember as a boy - - how we laughed at Hitler on the way to power.

SNIDER: Boy, you're really serious about this - - I mean you - -

ST. GEORGE: I'm very serious about it -- serious and concerned. I think I mentioned to you that I turned off my own telephone -- a year ago when I started work on this book -- because I was absolutely certain that the phone would be bugged and while I could control some of my own conversation, I could not control the conversations of others who might call me -- so that I lived and worked without a telephone.

SNIDER: But if it's so serious and if it's such a danger, how could they bungle a simple thing like tapping the telephone or bugging the telephone of Larry O'Brien in the Watergate Hotel?

ST. GEORGE: Well they have bungled a number of things -- although the tapping of Larry O'Brien's phone was not really bungled by the CIA, it was bungled by this White House crew. And there's even some speculation that it was not so much a bungle as a trap and that the CIA had something to do with setting the trap. But be that as it may -- their bungles do not endear them to us -- The bungles are the little details that come to the surface. They don't reassure me at all.

SNIDER: Tell the naked lady story --

ST. GEORGE: It is not a story -- it's a fact -- I was shooting a story in Miami for Look Magazine, and I left my hotel room to shoot some film at the airport and partly to let the girl to whom I had given my room key -- to change for our next photographic take. She went upstairs, undressed -- the CIA men watching me in a rather casual matter of fact way in which we assume we are watched and followed, saw me drive to the airport in my little convertible -- and went upstairs with his friend to exchange my phone for a bugged phone, because that's a simple way of doing it -- You simply lift the regular phone out of the hotel room and you put in a telephone that already has a tap and a bug in it -- but the poor girl whom I had told to change was standing naked in front of the mirror -- as these two men entered without knocking --

There was a scream -- there was confusion -- there was hell to pay. They went into the bathroom, had a little conference and walked out without a word -- This sort of thing makes life interesting -- but I'd rather do without it!

SNIDER: Probably the lady who was standing before the mirror in the hotel room without her clothes on -- would just as soon do without it too!

You see little incidents like that make me wonder if the CIA is really to be worried about that much -- on the one hand you say they're killers and on the other hand, they walk in and get involved in a caper like that. Maybe I'm just not taking them seriously enough.

Are they involved in my life in any way? Are they involved in the lives of an average American citizen in any way?

ST. GEORGE: They are involved in the lives of average American citizens to a far greater degree than Americans realize - - and you see that's really the problem. This organization has become an enormous power - - we don't really realize that. They think of it as a little group of specialists who are listening in on the phone - -

SNIDER: (unclear) Sure - - tucked away in Virginia - - down a little dirt road without an awful lot of publicity - - no big sign on the front of the building - - that says CIA headquarters or is there - - I've never seen it.

ST. GEORGE: No there isn't. There's a sign saying Langley Water Station, or something - - but they are important. They used to go around with false press credentials saying - - I'm from UPI, or - - so they set up their own press agency, called AIP - - and for a decade we had a press agency operating out of New York, that was a wholly owned subsidiary of the CIA. They were able to open many of the (unclear) there would be AP, UPI, AIP, but AIP was CIA.

SNIDER: You've got an awful lot of initials there - - I'm sure I can't follow all of them - - the CIA operated its own press agency.

ST. GEORGE: It's own wire service.

SNIDER: Is there any way - - to correct these alleged abuses?

ST. GEORGE: There's always a way to correct abuses - - but the way is not always easy and I for one - - have no prescription. It's up to Congress - - it's up to the people - - to some extent it's up to the media - - even up to people like you - - We must keep trying. That's about all we can say at this stage.

SNIDER: Yes except I don't want to get to the state - - none of us do - - where you have to take out your telephone - - and you have to be afraid to go down the street - - or you have to start getting paranoid that somebody is looking over your shoulder every minute of the day. I don't want to feel like that - - and I'm sure you don't either. Yet you've gone through this now for some years - - and you've taken your own telephone out!

ST. GEORGE: It gets to be a nuisance - - my little boy's social life is upset - - his dates can't call him - - it gets to be a real nuisance. It influences your life in more ways than one.

SNIDER: All right. Mr. St. George thank you for being with us here this morning, and maybe some day they'll quit bugging us!

ST. GEORGE: I hope so.